

RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION IN UKRAINE'S MEDIA SPACE AS A FACTOR IN THE FORMATION OF CONFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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Abstract

This article presents a comprehensive study in the field of religious studies of religious periodicals in Ukraine from the early 1990s to the present. It attempts to analyze the dynamics of the emergence and transformation of printed religious mass media in the context of the democratization of social life, changes in the information environment, and the development of civil society. It is noted that religious periodicals occupy a special place within the media landscape, since they perform not only the function of conveying information but also tasks of catechesis, spiritual-educational ministry, the formation of value orientations, and the preservation of cultural-historic heritage. The study traces the main thematic directions of religious publications, from theological and catechetical materials to socio-humanitarian issues and analytical articles. It shows that these publications reflect not only intra-confessional processes but also current social transformations, creating a space for communication between religion, culture, and the civic environment. The phenomenon of the target orientation of printed religious media, which determines their intended audience and the effectiveness of communication, is considered separately. It is shown that the religious press actively uses various communicative strategies, including nonverbal forms, literary narratives, interviews, reports, pedagogical and educational materials. At the same time, an important trend in recent decades is the gradual transfer of a significant portion of religious periodicals to digital formats, which corresponds to the challenges of the information society. The conclusion is that religious periodicals in Ukraine are multifunctional in character, combining informational, educational, formative, and culture-forming components. They contribute to the formation of confessional identity, support interpersonal and social communication, and create conditions for religious self-expression and dialogue. Despite a reduction in the number of printed publications due to economic and technological factors, the religious press retains its relevance by adapting to the digital environment and remaining an important instrument of spiritual and cultural life in Ukrainian society.

Keywords: religious communication, religious periodicals, identity, mass media, spirituality, democratic values, religious politics.

Introduction

The phenomenon of the religious press in the Ukrainian context is conditioned by a number of sociocultural, communicative, and mediational factors that determine its specificity and functioning within the structure of printed mass media. First of all, it is worth noting the sociocultural dimension. Ukrainian society, historically belonging to the Slavic cultural area, preserves a tradition of literary centricity, in which communication is primarily conceived as a “high,” bookish form of cultural interaction. This is manifested in the worldview phenomenon of the “civil religion of culture,” where faith in the state and literature emerges as a component of social identity.¹ At the same time, religious press is influenced by traits of the information society, the dynamics of mass culture, and the transformation of the mass-media space.

Despite competition from new media, printed publications retain a number of advantages – tangibility, repeated access to information, and the function of integrating the individual into society. Religious magazines and newspapers not only provide a communicative link between the individual and the church community but also create a sense of belonging to a broader social body. Moreover, the segmented religious press performs a niche function by addressing specific audiences, which enhances its communicative effectiveness.

Overall, religious periodicals constitute part of the wider field of printed mass media, which includes books, brochures, and secular press. The research focuses on confessional press that, adapting to contemporary challenges, combines traditional forms of communication with elements of modern mass-media discourse. This creates a double effect: the believer who uses confessional printed resources may feel their difference from the mass audience, while at the same time being drawn into processes of “worldview modernization” through contact with secular topics, stylistic innovations, or political narratives.

A second important factor is the transformation of the structure of the printed product market. The hierarchical model of media organization yields to horizontal configurations, especially at the regional level. This creates favorable conditions for the development of local religious publications oriented toward parish and secular issues.

¹ М. Балакліцький. *Медіатизація протестантизму в Україні 1991 – 2010 років: Монографія*. [Mediatization of Protestantism in Ukraine, 1991–2010: A Monograph]. Х.: Харківське історико-філологічне товариство, 2011. 21.

A third feature is the absence of a single media system in the country—the press of the capital, regional centers, and small towns has a heterogeneous structure and reflects the diversity of cultural, social, and religious contexts.

The fourth aspect concerns the use of advertising, which becomes an important factor in media functioning, including religious publications, though it acquires specific forms there.

The combination of these trends directly affects the state of the religious press in Ukraine. According to data as of 2024, more than 262 registered printed religious publications of various confessional orientations and general-religious character were operating in the country.² In addition, there are numerous parish newspapers with local distribution and small print runs. However, numerical advantage does not always correlate with qualitative characteristics, leaving open the question of the effectiveness and social impact of religious periodicals.

At the same time, religious topics remain present in the secular print media, forming a field of religious communication beyond confessional structures. However, methodological and worldview problems arise here: the neglect of religious topics due to limited resources; insufficient competence of journalists; editorial ideological bias or outright anti-religious attitudes.³ This demonstrates the complexity of religious communication in an environment dominated by non-religious priorities and values.

Orthodox Religious Periodicals in Ukraine

Analyzing the functioning of religious printed periodicals requires outlining confessional specifics that determine both the structural organization of this media segment and its content orientations. Quantitatively, the Orthodox press dominates. According to the Book Chamber of Ukraine in 2024, it is represented by 134 publications.⁴ While in the 1990s the informational initiatives of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church were largely compilatory and limited to reprints of materials, subsequently Orthodox journalism began to form as a specific religiously motivated discourse that represents a confessional interpretation of social and spiritual processes.

² Випуск періодичних і продовжуваних видань. [Publication of Periodicals and Continuing Editions]. *Книжкова палата України*. http://www.ukrbook.net/statistika_.html

³ Т. Меттінглі. “Влучити в ціль.” [To hit the mark]. <http://www.telekritika.ua/2009-03-13/44316>

⁴ Випуск періодичних і продовжуваних видань. [Publication of Periodicals and Continuing Editions]. *Книжкова палата України*. http://www.ukrbook.net/statistika_.html

This process unfolds in two dimensions. First, the number of information projects aimed at a broad audience increases; second, the pace of registration of new communities slows—a general trend across all Christian confessions in Ukraine. Religious journalism is gradually shifting from a missionary paradigm to a service paradigm, where the main objective becomes not only preaching but also the formation of a distinct worldview space. In this context, Orthodox media face missionary, catechetical, and educational tasks.⁵

Institutionally, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church is the most active in periodical press. It has an extensive network of diocesan, thematic, youth, and children's publications, as well as printed organs of parishes and deaneries. These outlets predominantly carry catechetical, moral-ethical, and informative content, including official documents and pastoral letters. At the same time, some publications demonstrate ideological bias, in particular along lines of great-power rhetoric.

Regional analysis shows significant concentration of Orthodox publications in Eastern Ukraine and Volhynia. Kharkiv diocesan publications include "Kharkiv Diocesan News," "Voice of Orthodoxy," "Orthodox Word," and others.⁶ In parallel, monastery newspapers, charitable and parish publications oriented toward churchgoers, clergy, and pilgrims operate. They combine theological content with social-humanitarian topics, offering analysis of religious self-awareness in contemporary society.

Part of the Orthodox periodical press has a clear educational orientation and targets family audiences by publishing materials on moral upbringing, spiritual tradition, and practical religious life ("Zolotyi svitylnyk," "Khrystianin," "Blahovist," "Zhyve Dzherelo," etc.).⁷ This segment preserves the tradition of sectioning content according to age and social groups of readers.

A special place in the history of Ukrainian Orthodox journalism is occupied by the newspaper "Dzvony Volyni"⁸ (since 1991), which became one of the most authoritative religious publications in Volhynia. It combined theological reflection with analysis of current social issues, laying the foundation for a Christian discourse in the public sphere. Other Volhynian publications

⁵ "Інформаційна робота Православної церкви – одна з тем на Форумі 'Новомедіа'". [Information Activities of the Orthodox Church as One of the Themes at the "Novomedia" Forum]. <http://novomedia.ua/node/1483>

⁶ "Спархіальний склад." [Diocesan Framework]. *Харківська єпархія*. <https://www.eparchia.kharkov.ua/stat/33>

⁷ С. А. Гур'єва, "Типологічні особливості релігійної преси Східної України." [Typological Features of the Religious Press in Eastern Ukraine]. *Вісник СумДУ. Серія філологія*. 2007. № 1. 23.

⁸ *Дзвони Волині*. [Bells of Volyn]. <https://volyn.church.ua/2017/03/03/gazeta-dzvoni-volini-za-lyutij-2017-roku>

such as “Pravoslavia” and “Volyn Pravoslavna”⁹ maintained local specificity while demonstrating thematic diversity and cultural representativeness.

Noteworthy are the new informational initiatives of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. On July 28, 2019, the Kyiv Metropolis launched the monthly newspaper “Moya Tserkva,”¹⁰ and in October of the same year the printed “Ukrainian Church Herald: Autocephalous Church.”¹¹ Both titles are positioned as instruments of education, spiritual communication, and unifying mission. They not only inform about Church life but also integrate religious communication into the modern media space, actively using digital platforms, social networks, and multimedia formats.

Thus, the Orthodox periodical press in Ukraine demonstrates a multi-level structure: from diocesan and parish newspapers to central and nationwide publications. It performs functions of catechesis, education, and cultural-civilizational communication while reflecting intra-confessional and socio-political discourses.

Catholic Printed Publications as a Form of Religious Communication in Ukraine

After the collapse of the USSR, Ukrainian journalism gradually moved from a totalitarian to a democratic model of communication. With the institutional restoration of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church (UGCC), the revival of its printed periodicals began; the first Greek-Catholic newspapers and journals after a long hiatus appeared, synchronizing church communication with new social conditions.

The forerunner of the official periodical of the Lviv Archdiocese was the newspaper “Vira batkiv,” which prepared the ground for the 1991 revival of the publication “Meta.” Dissidents and public figures stood at the origins of “Meta”. From the very beginning, its content core included current church documents, sermons, spiritual conversations, answers to readers' questions, and historical studies. In 2001, its frequency changed from biweekly to monthly; its print run in the

⁹ Волинська область. Газети та журнали. [The Volyn Region: Press and Periodicals]. *Книжкова палата України*. <http://www.ukrbook.net/DZMI Obl 2/Volyn Obl/Volyn.htm>

¹⁰ “Моя церква.” [My Church]. *Офіційне видання Київської Митрополії Православної Церкви України*. https://www.pomisna.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/moia_tserkva_nomer_1-1_28-07-2019-3.pdf

¹¹ “Український церковний вісник: Помісна Церква.” [Ukrainian Church Herald: Autocephalous Church]. *Офіційне видання Київської Митрополії Православної Церкви України*. https://www.pomisna.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/ptsu_2020_610_web-1.pdf

early 2,000s did not exceed 5,000 copies and later decreased. Today the newspaper is available in PDF format; the website hosts an archive of issues for 2003-2024.¹²

In 1991 the biweekly of the Ivano-Frankivsk Eparchy “Nova Zorya”¹³ was revived; by the end of the first decade of the 21st century it had one of the largest circulations in the UGCC (14,000). Alongside official sections, it consistently published materials for a broad range of practicing believers, including texts on spiritual practices.

The newspaper of the Sambir-Drohobych Eparchy “Zhyva Voda”¹⁴ (founded in 1995) combined church chronicle with theological, historical, cultural materials and coverage of state-confessional relations; at the end of the first decade of the 21st century the monthly's circulation reached 6,000. According to the eparchy's website, the last printed issue appeared in March 2022.

“Bozhyi Siach”¹⁵ of the Mukachevo Eparchy, established in 1991, was published as a newspaper and since 2006 as a monthly magazine; today it is bimonthly. Key thematic directions include church chronicle, essays about the new martyrs and confessors of the 20th century, and socially significant articles. Thus, among the mentioned organs, “Meta” and “Nova Zorya” have historic predecessors. Although some paper-based eparchial publications are gradually becoming relics of the past, their corpus of texts retains source value for the study of parish histories, church communities, youth movements, and religious organizations of the UGCC.

During the period before the widespread use of the internet, there remained an unfilled niche for a pan-church socio-religious periodical of the UGCC (analogous to the Polish monthly “Gość Niedzielny”), while other confessions had similar communication instruments (for example, the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine until 2011 published the catechetical-informational “Parish Newspaper”). The awareness of the need for an institutional organ capable of systematically interpreting events in global Catholicism and the life of the Church in Ukraine through the lens of Christian doctrine stimulated several attempts.

¹² “Мета.” [Goal]. *Часопис Львівської Архиєпархії Української Греко-Католицької Церкви*. <https://www.meta-ugcc-lviv.com>

¹³ “Нова Зоря.” [New Star]. *Часопис Івано-Франківської Митрополії Української Греко-Католицької Церкви*. https://novazorija.com.ua/?page_id=82

¹⁴ “Жива Вода.” [Living Water]. *Газета Самбірсько-Дрогобицької Спархії Української Греко-Католицької Церкви*. <http://sde.org.ua/zmi/zvoda.html>

¹⁵ “Божий сіяч.” [God's Sower]. *Газета Тернопільсько-Зборівської митрополії Української Греко-Католицької Церкви*. <https://bs-tze.org.ua>

The first such initiative was the socio-religious “Arka”¹⁶ (2000). During the first year the concept of the publication formed; large theological, moral-ethical, historical, and ecological pieces appeared on its pages. In early 2001 the newspaper switched to a more concise, multi-thematic format emphasizing social, historical, and artistic issues and reflection on religious processes in Ukraine and the world. In early 2009 the Striysk Eparchy administration closed the publication.

With the establishment of UGCC structures in Kyiv in 2009, the journal “Nash Sobor”¹⁷ was launched (initially the Kyiv Archdiocese, later the Kyiv-Halychskaya Metropolis). Aimed at a wide readership, it aspired to the role of a nationwide church media, but by 2019 its circulation amounted to only 1,200 copies. Some issues for 2020–2021 are available on the archdiocese website. During the full-scale war the journal did not appear.

Since the mid-1990s, with the return of monasteries to ordinary monastic life, publishing activity of the orders resumed. The Basilian Province of the Most Holy Savior maintains a number of periodical platforms. The history of the monthly “Misionar”¹⁸ is detailed in the work of its editor Fr. Khrystofor Hanynets “Letters to the People: Stories of the People of the Word.” The revived first issue was published in April 1992 at the monastery of St. Onuphrius in Lviv. In the early 2000s the circulation reached about 6,000; today it exceeds 2,000. Structurally, the journal combines theological, liturgical, historical (chronicles of Basilian houses, profiles of notable monks) and cultural sections; materials for youth and children are regularly present. In 2003–2007 the editorial board published an annual almanac “Misionar Calendar.” Publishing activity is carried out within the updated “Misioner” publishing house (St. Onuphrius Monastery, printing house in Zhovkva).

Among key Basilian publications in the diaspora is “Svitlo” (since 1937). In 1991 a separate editorial office was established at the Lviv “Misionar” that focused on covering relations between the UGCC and the state, social ministry of clergy and laity, and the history of the UGCC

¹⁶ “Арка.” [Ark]. *Часопис. Суспільно-релігійна газета.* <https://violity.com/ru/115424810-chasopis-arka-suspilno-religijna-gazeta-2007>

¹⁷ “Наш Собор.” [Our Council]. *Журнал Києво-Галицької митрополії Української Греко-Католицької Церкви.* <https://ugcc.church/blog/zhurnal-nash-sobor-vypusk-5-050-zhovten-2021>

¹⁸ “Місіонар.” [Missionary]. *Український Католицький часопис.* <https://misionar.in.ua>

in the 19th-20th centuries.¹⁹ For economic reasons the Ukrainian edition was suspended (circulation above 1,000).

In 1998 the Province founded the quarterly “Kyivska Tserkva”—an almanac of Christian thought with publications by theologians, religious scholars, historians, cultural experts, and art historians aimed at popularizing the two-thousand-year heritage of Ukrainian Christianity. Due to lack of resources the project ended in 2000. A similar fate befell “Lavra” (a monthly of monks of the Studite rule, founded in 1998 at the St. Michael monastery in Lviv): it ran for less than two years, had a distinct academic-cultural profile, and was targeted at the intelligentsia and academic audiences.

Within the “Svichado” publishing house the bimonthly “Zerniatko”²⁰ has been published since 1995 for readers aged 10-12; in some years circulation exceeded 30,000 copies. At the same time, the development of youth Christian movements spawned demand for periodicals for communities: since 1993 the important platform has been the fortnightly “Viruiu.”²¹ The publication received active reader feedback and published meaningful catechetical materials and answers to spiritual queries. Since 2001 its publication became irregular and later was suspended.

In the early 2000s, during the consolidation of church governance under the leadership of His Beatitude Lubomyr Husar, the format of official publications with historical antecedents from the 20th century was revived. “Vodomosti...”, “Visnyky...” of the eparchies appeared. In 2001 “Blahovisnyk of the Major Archbishop of the Kyivo-Halytska UGCC”²² was launched, oriented toward the Roman model of 1965-1988. The 2020 issue collected documents related to the functioning of the Church during the pandemic; sections typically include documents of Pope Francis, the Major Archbishop, the Patriarchal Curia, the Patriarchal Council, the Synod of Bishops, and a chronicle of events.

¹⁹ “Видавнича справа і періодика монахів-василіян у контексті їхнього служіння в Канаді: історичний ракурс і сьогодення.” [Publishing and periodicals of Basilian monks in the context of their ministry in Canada: historical perspective and present day]. *Релігійно-інформаційна служба України*. https://risu.ua/vidavnicha-sprava-i-periodika-monahiv-vasiliyan-u-konteksti-jihnogo-sluzhinnya-v-kanadi-istorichnyi-rakurs-i-sogodenna_n79774

²⁰ “Зернятко.” [Little Grain]. *Свічадо.* https://svichado.com/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=3231&srltid=AfmBOoq7cFUaqwhmGAL2OgJ6XJ1Zs5ne0n9ct95GqUqBv25-0FKnKfha

²¹ Часопис “Вірую”. [Magazine “I Believe”]. *WordPress*. <https://viryjv.wordpress.com/історія>

²² Вийшов друком черговий номер “Благовісника Верховного Архієпископа Києво-Галицького УГКЦ”. [Blahovisnyk of the Major Archbishop of the Kyivo-Halytska UGCC]. *Українська Греко-Католицька Церква*. <https://ugcc.ua/data/vyyshov-drukom-chergovyy-nomer-blagovisnyka-verhovnogo-arhyepyskopa-kyevo-galytskogo-ugkts-352>

With the establishment of the Lviv Archdiocese, the monthly “Lviv Archdiocesan News”²³ was launched, which publishes church documents, sermons of Archbishop and Metropolitan Ihor Vozniak, official announcements and clergy articles; for administrative purposes the “Bulletin of the Chancellery of the Lviv Archdiocese”²⁴ is also published. Among eparchial novelties of 2001-2011 stands out the monthly of the Buchach Eparchy “Khrystova Skelia”²⁵ (first issue, January 2003), oriented to cover eparchial events, news of the Catholic Church and analytical spiritual-religious, historical, educational and artistic materials addressed to a broad readership regardless of age or confessional belonging.

Improvement of the macroeconomic situation in Ukraine in the mid-2000s contributed to the expansion of the UGCC periodical market, primarily in the segment of specialized prints. In January 2006 the first issue of the youth magazine “Hospod’ i ya”²⁶ appeared, published by the Basilian Institute of Philosophical-Theological Studies named after Yosyp Velyamin Rutskyi (Lviv–Bryukhovychi). The web archive of issues placed on the institute’s site attests to a high level of printing quality and orientation toward academic youth with an expressed Christian identity (the last posted issue is 2020). During the full-scale war the periodicity was reduced to an annual issue.

In 2008 in Lviv the Province of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorists) launched the monthly “Zakon i Myloserdia” aimed at audiences in places of detention; due to the niche specificity the project was short-lived.

At the same time, the “Svichado” publishing house developed a line of specialized children’s and youth publications. The educational magazine “Anheliatko”²⁷ was published in 2006-2017. For readers older than 11, the “Sto Talantiv” magazine idea was implemented in 2005. Despite pronounced niche and pedagogical orientation, issues of these three publications were discontinued for economic reasons and market conditions.

Concurrently, a sector of professional periodicals addressed to theologians, humanitarians, students, and the intelligentsia developed. In 2009 the publication “Khrystianyn i Svit”²⁸ appeared

²³ “Львівські архієпархіальні відомості.” [Lviv Archiepiscopal Bulletin]. Чтиво. https://chtyvo.org.ua/authors/Lvivski_arkhieparkhialni_vidomosty

²⁴ “Бюлєтень Канцелярії Курії Львівської Архиєпархії.” [Bulletin of the Chancery of the Curia of the Lviv Archeparchy]. Канцелярії Курії Львівської Архиєпархії УГКЦ. <https://www.ugccla.lviv.ua>

²⁵ “Христова скеля.” [Christ’s Rock]. Часопис Бучацької епархії Української Греко-Католицької Церкви. <https://www.buchachearchy.org.ua/departamenti/mas-media.html>

²⁶ “Господь і я.” [The Lord and I]. Християнський молодіжний часопис. <https://gospodija.in.ua>

²⁷ “Ангелятко.” [Little Angel]. Barabooka. Проспір української дитячої книги.

<https://www.barabooka.com.ua/angelyatko>

²⁸ “Християнин і світ.” [Christian and the World]. Журнал для християн, фахівців своєї справи. <http://xic.com.ua>

with a declarative inscription on the cover: “A magazine for Christians who are professionals in their field.”

A systematic academic platform became the Scientific Bulletin of the Ivano-Frankivsk Theological Academy “Dobryi Pastyr”²⁹—an annual that since 2007 has been published in print as a collection of scholarly papers; full PDF issues are available on its website. That same year the publication was registered as a specialized periodical in the fields of theology, philosophy, history, and sociology.

In 2011 three metropolises were formed within the UGCC with seats in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil. The development of corresponding media commissions led to the appearance of new publications. Thus, in the Ivano-Frankivsk Archdiocese in January 2011 the annual “Visnyk Ivano-Frankivskoi Arkhiieparkhii”³⁰ was launched. The last accessible issue for 2023 is available in the web archive; sections include pastoral planning up to 2025, plans of commissions, pilgrimages, selected church documents, chronicle, sermons, etc. That same year the media center “Apostol” of the Ivano-Frankivsk Archdiocese founded the journal “Slovo.”³¹ Each issue has a thematic core developed across sixteen established sections with various analytical and pastoral materials.

Among promising family-oriented titles, the magazine “Kana”³² (2012-2019), launched by “Svichado,” stands out. There were no analogues of this format in the post-Soviet UGCC press. The publication formed a Christian family culture in both ecclesial and broader cultural dimensions and maintained a high artistic and technical level. The issue was discontinued in early 2019 for economic reasons.

The bimonthly “Skyniia”³³ (print version 2013-2022) occupied the niche of “spiritual reading”; since 2018 it developed a full website and social media for daily spiritual reflections. Founded on May 1, 2013, at the monastery of the Congregation of the Orionine Fathers in Lviv, the journal combined printed and digital formats.

²⁹ “Добрий Пастир:” науковий вісник Івано-Франківської академії Івана Золотоустого. Богослов’я. Філософія. Історія. [Good Parson: scientific bulletin of Ivano-Frankivsk Academy of John Chrysostom. Theology. Philosophy. History]. *Івано-Франківська академія Івана Золотоустого*. <https://journal.ifaiz.edu.ua/index.php/gp/index>

³⁰ “Вісник Івано-Франківської Архієпархії.” [Bulletin of the Ivano-Frankivsk Archdiocese]. *Івано-Франківська Архієпархія Української Греко-Католицької Церкви*. <https://ugccif.org.ua/visnyk>

³¹ “Слово.” [The Word]. *Християнський журнал*. <https://www.slovo.if.ua>

³² “Кана.” [Kana]. *Свічадо*. <https://svichado.com/rozprodazh/kana>

³³ “Скинія.” [Tabernacle]. *WordPress*. <https://skynia.wordpress.com/actual-year>

At the archdiocesan level the UGCC in print retains “Nova Zorya” (Ivano-Frankivsk) and “Bozhyi Siach” (Ternopil), while “Meta” (Lviv) has moved online (PDF). At the eparchial level “Khristova Skelia” (Chortkiv) and “Blahovisnyk” (Uzhhorod) continue to be published. Official chronicle bulletins are maintained by the Kyiv, Lviv, and Ivano-Frankivsk archdioceses, although their paper periodicity is irregular. In the conditions of a full-scale war, paper periodicals that would meet modern criteria for periodicity are almost non-existent in the central, southern, and eastern regions. In the segment of socio-religious media many titles have moved to electronic formats (including “Patriarhat”). At the same time “Slovo” (Ivano-Frankivsk) continues to supplement the media field with paper issues.

Among publications for a broad circle of believers in print, “Misionar” (Lviv) remains stable. The youth segment is represented by the semi-annual “Piznai Pravdu” (Lviv) and the annual “Hospod i ya” (Lviv–Bryukhovychi). For the academic community and intelligentsia “Dobryi Pastyr” is printed; “Khristianyn i Svit”, despite discontinuing its paper version, continues producing content online.

Today approximately 13 significant paper newspapers and magazines of the UGCC can be identified, while three titles in 2022–2023 transitioned to online format. Compared to the UGCC periodical registration recorded roughly 15 years ago, a reduction of at least half is observed.

The number of Roman Catholic Church (RCC) publications in Ukraine is small, but the Roman Catholic tradition has a strong school of church journalism and the richest corpus of pastoral documents regarding mass media, which are widely used beyond the Catholic environment. The nationwide publication “Parish Newspaper” appears twice a month, providing news from the life of the Catholic Church as a catechetical-formation supplement; the monthly “Propovidnyk” functions as well. Each diocese maintains its own printed organs. The Dominican publishing house “Kairos” issues the “Religious Information Bulletin” as a digest of religious and social materials from Ukrainian media.

Altogether under the aegis of the RCC about ten titles are issued, among which five are diocesan (“Radość Wiary,” “Wołanie z Wołynia,” “CREDO,” “Slavorum apostolic,” “Dity Neporochnoi”), two belong to monastic orders (“Rozarii,” “Slovo z namy”) and three are

institutional founders (“Catholic Herald/Parish Newspaper,” “Socium,” “Vodohrai”).³⁴ The Roman Catholic community in Kharkiv additionally issues the journal “Velychaie.”

Protestant Periodical Press in Ukraine: Circulations, Thematic Accents, and Development Dynamics

The largest circulations among religious printed media in Ukraine are characteristic of the Protestant segment, primarily charismatic communities and organizations associated with them. Unlike the Orthodox and Catholic press, Protestant publications typically minimize socio-political discourse. Instead, a significant portion of newspaper space is occupied by narratives of conversion, testimonies of personal religious experience, and existential accounts of encountering God and spiritual practices.

Protestant media demonstrate a communication model of an “influential minority,” relevant for civil society with a broad network of non-governmental and non-political actors. The widespread thesis that these media address exclusively “individual” recipients needs correction: despite a personalized narrative style, the publications function within the logic of mass communication, addressing collective audiences via individual experience. One of the most visible ecumenically oriented printed organs is the fortnightly “Khrystyyanskyi Svit,”³⁵ which combines informational materials about life in various churches with theological-catechetical and socio-religious analysis.

Evangelical Christian-Baptists. Representative titles include the journal “Yevanhel'ska Nyva,”³⁶ the newspaper “Voskresinnia,” and the specialized newspaper for people with hearing impairments “Holos v Pustyni.” The “Word of Life” church supports issues of “Slovo Zhyttia.”³⁷ At the regional level in eastern Ukraine, weeklies such as “Blahodat” (Sumy), “Shliakh do zhyttia” (Krasnyi Luch), and “Nove zhyttia z Bohom” (Kramatorsk)³⁸ retain influence.

³⁴ О. Керц “Типологія періодичних видань римо-католицької церкви України.” [Typology of periodicals of the Roman Catholic Church of Ukraine]. <http://bo0k.net/index.php?p=achapter&bid=17990&chapter=1>

³⁵ Т. Антошевський. “Релігійні мас-медіа в Україні.” [Religious mass media in Ukraine]. *Релігійно-інформаційна служба України*. https://risu.ua/religiyni-mas-media-v-ukrajini_n9799

³⁶ “Євангельська нива.” [Evangelical Field]. Духовно-просвітницький журнал Всеукраїнського Союзу Церков евангельських християн-баптистів. <https://archive.org/details/EvangelicalFields2005>

³⁷ Т. Антошевський. “Релігійні мас-медіа в Україні.” [Religious mass media in Ukraine]. *Релігійно-інформаційна служба України*. https://risu.ua/religiyni-mas-media-v-ukrajini_n9799

³⁸ С. А. Гур'єва. “Типологічні особливості релігійної преси Східної України.” [Typological features of the religious press of Eastern Ukraine]. *Вісник СумДУ. Серія філологія*. 2007. № 1. 24.

Evangelical Christians of the Pentecostal tradition (Pentecostals) are represented by publications such as “Holos Nadii”³⁹ (mission “Voice of Hope”), “Viruiu”,⁴⁰ the journal “Blahovisnyk”⁴¹ and others.

Seventh-day Adventists publish the quarterly “Oznaky Chasu,”⁴² newspapers “Shliakh do istyny” (“Way to the Truth”), “Khrystianyn” (“Christian”); regional titles include “Khlib Nash Nasushchnyi” (Kharkiv), “Holos Istyny” (Donetsk), “Perekhrestia Dol” (Makiivka), “Svitlo Marii” (Horlivka).⁴³ The audience in the eastern regions remains stable though relatively small.

Charismatic organizations are characterized by the largest circulations (sometimes tens of thousands of copies) and a dominance of preaching-testimony themes; news components are presented episodically. Typical titles include “Slovo Viry,” “Nova Nadiia,” “Shody,” “Isus – Nashe Whittie,” “Svitovi Zhnyva,” “Mariupol Khrystyyanskyi.” For some publications, e.g. “Shody,” polemical rhetoric toward other confessions has been recorded, which calls for critical media-literacy reception.⁴⁴

The Ukrainian Lutheran Church publishes “Styah” (primarily pastoral-catechetical and socio-ethical content). Popular parish/community newspapers include “Dlia tebe” (with a focus on current social problems), “Tymofii,” “Dzherelo,” “Dobri Novyny.” The Full Gospel Church supports “Zhyva” (Donetsk) and “Kovcheh” (Krasnohorivka).⁴⁵

In Volhynia since 1991 the Christian missionary association of mercy and health has published the newspaper “Zhyva Voda”; that same year the Independent Christ Church (Lutsk) launched the free monthly “Spasinnia.” “Nova Nadiia” is a typical regional Protestant media for Volhynia.

Since 2005 the corporate bulletin “Novomedia” has been published annually, recording strategies, statements and reporting of the Association of Publishers, Journalists and Speakers. In

³⁹ “Голос надії.” [Voice of Hope]. Християнська місія. <https://www.voice.org.ua/menu/gazeta/2025>

⁴⁰ “Вірую.” [I Believe]. Українська Церква Християн Віри Євангельської. <https://www.chve.org.ua/the-newspaper-believe>

⁴¹ “Благовісник.” [The evangelist]. Церква християн віри євангельської України. <https://www.blag.org.ua/index.html>

⁴² “Ознаки часу.” [Signs of the Times]. Церква адвентистів сьомого дня <https://adventist.ua/news/publication/oznaki-chasu-shokvartalnij-hristiyanskij-naukovo-populyarnij-zhurnal-pro-duhovni-istini-dlya-ostannogo-chasu>

⁴³ С. А. Гур’єва. “Типологічні особливості релігійної преси Східної України.” [Typological features of the religious press of Eastern Ukraine]. *Вісник СумДУ. Серія філологія*. 2007. № 1. 24.

⁴⁴ Т. Антошевський. “Релігійні мас-медіа в Україні.” [Religious mass media in Ukraine]. *Релігійно-інформаційна служба України*. https://risu.ua/religiyni-mas-media-v-ukrajini_n9799

⁴⁵ “Лютеранство.” [Lutheranism]. *Релігійно-інформаційна служба України*. https://risu.ua/lyuteranstvo_n34001

2004-2006 activist Taras Boiko published the newspaper “Knygonosha” (from 2010 in electronic format).⁴⁶ In 2008 the Association of Christian Publishers of Ukraine was formed, which offered support to authors (critic contests, a school of Christian publishing, special manuals).

The children's magazine “Tropynka” became popular (in the early 1990s it had over one million readers). The Ukrainian Bible Society, founded at the initiative of Protestants, scaled the distribution of biblical literature, exceeding previous historical figures (about 13 million copies of biblical publications in total).⁴⁷

According to state confessional-statistical summaries, the number of periodical titles increased by approximately 15% in the selected period with marked segmentation by confession and target audiences. The main drivers of growth were the Full Gospel Church (40% in printed communication) and the UOC (16%). Moderate growth (by 1-3 positions) is observed in the UGCC, Pentecostals, Adventists, and the Reformed Church of Zakarpattia. Some directions lack their own domestic periodicals and use imported titles (traditionally Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, etc.). The Lutheran segment remained consistently small (1-3 titles).

At the same time some church communities reduced their list of periodicals: Roman Catholic Church (30%), Ukrainian Orthodox Church (14%), union of Evangelical Christian-Baptists (27%). These changes indicate not so much a reduction of communication as a reorientation toward television, internet platforms, and digital formats. One of the defining trends in recent years is the migration of religious press to digital environments and gradual abandonment of classic paper periodicals.

Targeting of the Religious Press: Typology and Communicative Features

Targeting is one of the key parameters that determines the quality of distribution and the scale of the audience of religious periodicals. It affects not only quantitative indicators of the readership base but also the degree of integration of publications into network and mass communication. Religious printed media can be aimed at a broad public as well as at clearly defined groups of believers, neophytes, youth or other social categories.

Typology of religious publications by target audience (targeting):

⁴⁶

“Книгоноша.”

[Book

Carrier].

BookChef.

https://bookchef.ua/publishers/knigonosha/?srsltid=AfmBOoqxoEXj1vttwKqhi_OJzHADp9WillPrWnV_6GqUi2STUZ9UXhBw

⁴⁷ Українське Біблійне Товариство. [The Ukrainian Bible Society]. <https://www.ukrbbs.org>

Mass publications. This segment includes the most general periodicals aimed at a broad readership. They combine materials on religious and socio-cultural topics. Examples include “Spilna Mova,” “Pravoslavnyi Visnyk,” “Visnyk Press-Service of the UOC,” “Information Bulletin of the UOC,” “Rivnenshchyna Religious,” “Meta” (Lviv eparchy of the UAPC).

Publications for believers and neophytes. This is the most numerous category, where the local level of coverage predominates. Materials are mostly focused on events of local communities, parishes and eparchies. Examples: “Watchtower,” “Awake!,” “Svichnyk,” “Mylist ta Istyna,” “Khrystos ye Vidpovid,” “Tscherkovna Pravoslavna Gazeta,” “Volyn Eparchial News,” “Credo,” “Misionar,” etc.

Children's publications. In Ukraine there are over 70 children's religious newspapers and magazines, among them eparchial titles (“Bohdan,” “Zerniatko,” “Nezabudka,” “Radist Moia,” “Svitlo Rizdva,”) joint projects of eparchies and religious centers (“Ahnets,” “Vertograd,” “Vodohrai”), as well as products of religious publishers (“Anheliatko,” “Sto Talantiv”). These publications combine educational-formative and catechetical components.

Publications with children's sections. Some periodicals integrate special pages for children, such as “Catholic Herald,” “Save Our Souls!,” “Svichnyk,” “My Healthy Family,” “Piznai Pravdu.”

Youth publications. This segment covers adolescents and youth. Examples: “Horizonty,” “Tineidzer@ukr.net” (Zaporizhzhia), “Flesh.ka” (Seventh-day Adventists), “Ukrainian Youth—For Christ,” Orthodox “Otrok.ua.”

Family publications. These are aimed at family reading and emphasize gradual engagement with faith through materials free of direct moralizing. Such magazines are directed at forming Christian values in everyday family life and culture.

Ecumenical publications. There are few of these in Ukraine. They mainly focus on general Christian issues while avoiding emphasis on confessional differences. Examples include the bulletin of the Christian Community of the Ostroh Academy “Alternatyva,” the pedagogical journal “Slovo v Vchytelu” addressing Christian education issues, and the Protestant journal “My Healthy Family.”

Analyzing the religious press, one cannot ignore the modes of communication that are dominant and therefore effective in periodicals. It is appropriate to single out forms typical for the press in general: nonverbal communication (“Watchtower,” the journal “Spilna Mova”); literary

narratives (the journal “Svichnyk,” the evangelical newspaper “Christian Life” of Zaporizhzhia, “Otrok.ua”); travel/touristic journeys (the popular-philosophical-religious journal “Apeiron+”); interviews (“Visnyk Press-Service of the UOC,” “Rivnenshchyna Religious,” “Khrystos ye Vidpovid,” “Credo,” “Vidrodzhennia,” “Misionar.”)

Institutional modes of communication also deserve mention: minutes-of-meetings journals of church institutional bodies (for example, “Pravoslavnyi Visnyk”) and statistical information, protocols, statements (for example, “Information Bulletin of the UOC KP”).

Thus, the religious press in Ukraine is characterized by multi-level addressedness and a variety of genre-communicative forms. It reaches both a broad circle of readers and narrow confessional groups, providing catechetical, educational, informational and ecumenical functions. At the same time, most publications are oriented toward their own confessional segment and do not demonstrate a stable tendency toward inter-confessional dialogue.

Conclusions

The analysis of religious periodicals in Ukraine attests to their multifunctional and polystructural character. Printed religious media since the early 1990s have become an important factor in the institutional formation of religious organizations and their integration into new socio-cultural conditions. Periodicals not only met the task of informing believers but also formed a space of religious communication, contributed to catechesis, spiritual-educational activities, and the preservation and reproduction of cultural-religious heritage.

The study showed that religious publications develop in several directions: mass, parish-diocesan, specialized (children's, youth, family, scholarly), as well as in the sphere of ecumenical and interreligious communications. This indicates their addressedness and audience segmentation, which ensures more effective satisfaction of the spiritual and informational needs of different groups of believers.

An important result of the research is the identification of the trend toward the gradual migration of printed religious periodicals to digital formats. Such a transformation is caused by economic and technological factors as well as changes in modern media consumption. Nevertheless, printed periodicals retain significant importance due to their material and communicative features, which create a unique space for deeper spiritual reflection.

The phenomenon of target orientation is of particular importance, expressed in the orientation of periodicals to different age, social, and confessional groups. This demonstrates the ability of religious media to adapt to the conditions of the contemporary information society and provide multi-level communication—from individual to collective, from intra-confessional to inter-confessional.

Thus, the religious press in Ukraine is not only a reflection of religious processes but also an active factor of spiritual, cultural, and social life. It performs the function of integrating believers into community, forms confessional identity, fosters religious-cultural dialogue, and supports social cohesion. Despite the challenges of modernity, printed religious media remain relevant and capable of transformation, ensuring continuity while remaining open to new forms of communication in the era of digitalization.

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